‘The kids are alert’:

'The kids are alert': Employed students' experiences of and attitudes towards the use of social networking sites in recruitment and employment.

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Introduction

The use of social media by employers remains a relatively unexplored aspect of the employment relationship despite its increasing prevalence. Technical control has long been a tradition within labour process analysis, for example in the seminal work of Edwards (1979); but analysis of such control typically concerns technologies and systems used *within* the workplace to pace, direct, monitor, evaluate, reward and discipline workers (ibid; Callaghan and Thompson, 2001). Current anecdotal evidence indicates workers being monitored and disciplined by employers for activities on social networking (SN) sites which workers use mostly outside the working environment[1]. Recent high profile cases include Virgin Atlantic firing 13 cabin crew for making derogatory comments about passengers and the company's safety standards on a Facebook group (Conway, 2008); and (after a seven month investigation) a senior UK civil servant who was dismissed after anonymously posting comments on twitter which were seen to 'ridicule' government ministers (Watt, 2011).

In parallel, there has also been growing realisation of employers using SN sites both to attract, and to gather information on, potential recruits. Recent data from 35,000 agency and corporate US recruiters on the use of social media to *attract* recruits showed 48 per cent use LinkedIn, the 'professional network', with Twitter second most commonly used (by 19 per cent) and Facebook used by 10 per cent (Bullhorn Reach 2012). This report predicted increasing leverage of social media to attract particular segments of the professional population. When looking at more intrusive employer use of social media during recruitment and selection, Broughton et al. (2011) cite a US survey of over 2,600 HR professionals, 45 per cent of whom checked applicants' social network profiles prior to hiring them. Although apparently less frequent in the UK, a further survey of almost 600 UK managers and directors revealed that approximately 20 per cent found information online about an applicant, which the applicant did not volunteer (Viadeo, 2007). Almost 60 per cent of the managers in the UK survey stated that such information influenced their hiring decisions, with HR managers especially likely to report that candidates were declined on the basis of information discovered through social media.

Most current work considers the advantages of social media for employers and management. The UK's Chartered Institute for Personnel and Development proposed that social media could offer ' … HR a new way of making a significant contribution to their organisation's strategic and operational goals' (Martin et al., 2008: 3). This report emphasised how this contribution could be made, for example, through enabling communication between management and employees, creating on-line communities of practice and ultimately creating 'collective intelligence' in the organisation. Social media have been argued to bring benefits in communicating the employers' brand to potential

[1] Social media are broadly defined as web-based services that allow members to construct a profile detailing their personal information, create a list of users they have connections with and view and navigate through their connections and through other's connections (Boyd and Ellison, 2007). Social networking sites take the form of either personal networks (e.g. Facebook,Twitter) or professional networks that connect applicants with potential employers (e.g. LinkedIn) (Smith & Kidder, 2010; Hanna et al 2011, p.269).

applicants during recruitment processes and in communicating with applicants themselves (Martin et al., 2008; Tenwick, 2008). Even work that considers the potential harm that social media may cause to workers still focuses on issues of employer policy (e.g. Broughton et al., 2011). There has thus been little systematic research conducted on how workers directly experience the use of SN sites in the employment sphere. Such work is essential given the issues that employer use of social media raises for workers' and job applicants' privacy and the extension of employer technical surveillance outside of the workplace.

The paper seeks to address this gap by examining what may be termed a new 'contested terrain' (Edwards, 1979) of employer control. This contestation potentially arises as workers react to employers' extension of control and surveillance into their non-work lives. We begin with a review of existing labour process analysis of the use of technology and surveillance before extending these concepts to issues concerning the work-life boundary that potentially stem from employers' use of social media. This includes a consideration of the effects on workers' perceptions of fairness and justice in the workplace. Informed by this review, we pose three exploratory research questions: (1) what are workers' experiences of social media use in the employment sphere; (2) how do workers react to both realised and potential employer use of social media in terms of perceptions of fairness and justice; and (3) How is workers' on-line behaviour shaped by employer practice; e.g. do they try and maintain control over how their data on SN sites used.

The empirical study involved a survey of over 400 business and management school undergraduate students drawn from three Scottish Universities. The experiences and opinions of this particular group are especially germane given that they belong to the technologically literate 'generation Y' (Tenwick, 2008) and will soon be entering the marketplace for full-time (preferably graduate) employment. Many students now also work whilst studying and thus have considerable employment experience (Curtis and Lucas, 2000). Through examining the experiences and perceptions of this group of young labour market entrants the study adds to the labour process literature on the role of technology in monitoring and controlling workers, and especially how this may stretch beyond the boundaries of the workplace and into private lives. Thus, the paper goes beyond narrow managerial prescriptions to consider how potential job applicants and workers react to any extension of technological control by employers through the use of social media.

LPT, technology, surveillance and control

While the amount of research concerning management control has varied somewhat in the past few decades it is still quite reasonable to suggest that this issue remains a central component of debates surrounding the labour process (Thompson and van den Broek, 2010). These debates recognise that management control does not go uncontested; it does not stem from one source; there are many modes of management control; and we can expect to find a complex and dynamic mix of management control in any one situation (Lilley et al, 2009). A key reason why management control remains a focal point of labour process debates is that employers are interested in closing the gap between a worker's

notional capacity to labour and what the worker ends up doing (Sewell, 2005). A significant portion of recent research relates to the deployment of surveillance technologies as an emergent, expanding and evolving means to control a range of issues related to various labour processes.

The increased interest in surveillance technologies as a mode of management control appears to have emerged as a result of research related to two distinct areas of management research: firstly, research related to the peer monitoring component of contemporary teamwork (e.g. Sewell and Wilkinson, 1992; Sewell, 1998), and, secondly, research related to the role of integrated information technology systems seen to be central in the rapid expansion of call centres and call centre work from the early 1990s (e.g. Taylor and Bain, 1999; Bain and Taylor, 2000). However, as Russell (2008) argues, the call centre, and associations with the widespread and often insidious nature of worker surveillance technologies found in many call centres, quickly became a metaphor for larger social developments. As such, more recent research is beginning to take note of management using surveillance technologies to attempt to monitor the activities of workers not just at work, but also away from work and in emergent spaces created by the rise of the Internet and social media. Even though it has been widely demonstrated that there are distinct limits to what management can hope to achieve in terms of attempts to control workers through a wide-range of sophisticated surveillance technologies present in work settings (e.g. Thompson, 2003), the recent trend of workers taking to the Internet and social media does not appear to have stopped employers from attempting to both control and utilise such activities for organisational ends.

There is a wide and expanding range of reasons why employees increasingly utilise the Internet in relation to their employment. For instance, Richards (2012) proposes that employee use of the Internet has come a long way since the early 1990s when only the most technically gifted could utilise such technologies and everyone else was a passive recipient of information from a technical elite. More recent employee uses for the Internet identified in this research include job search practices, new and creative forms of 'misbehaviour', as well as evidence to suggest employees use social media to create employee-led discourses (see also Schoneboom, 2007). As such, it is no surprise to find evidence of employers attempting to try and control such environments, particularly in terms of monitoring the activities of workers who use social media in relation to their employment. For example, research on work blogs suggests that employees are aware of employers monitoring their social media activities (e.g. Richards, 2008, Ellis and Richards, 2009), and there is evidence that workers are increasingly using fora such as Facebook and Twitter for employment-related matters (Schoneboom, 2011). Worker use of social media suggests an opportunity for employers to extend control practices beyond the physical organisation and potentially encroach upon the non-working lives of workers. There is, however, an evident gap in our understanding of how workers experience employer control via social media and the strategies (and effectiveness of such strategies) used by workers to resist employer control in such domains. It can thus be argued that social media represents a new vehicle through which the boundaries between work and non-work lives can become blurred, a practice which workers may contest.

Employers, technology and the work-life boundary

The concept of the work-life boundary has its historical roots in the industrial revolution and the organisation of work into large specialised workplaces away from the family unit (Campbell-Clark, 2000). Such organisation had the effect that, ostensibly at least, 'work and life emerged as distinct spheres separated by time and space' (Warhurst et al., 2008 p. 2). Recently, however, the concept of the work-life boundary has evolved, in part, to address empirical and conceptual deficiencies in the notion that work and life *are* wholly separate spheres that need to be 'balanced' (ibid). Boundaries between work and non-work life have become increasingly blurred with the growth of flexible and adaptable work patterns such as out/home working (Fleming and Spicer, 2004). This blurring sheds doubt on the conceptualisation of work and life as separate, requiring a more nuanced approach which reflects 'interpenetration' of the spheres upon one another (Warhurst et al., 2008, p. 9; Fleming and Spicer, 2004). As such the borders that exist between work and family (or more generally non-work) life may show a high degree of permeability and flexibility, or even become blended where work and non-work tasks are carried out simultaneously[2] (Campbell-Clark, 2000).

Technology has been one of the key factors blurring the boundaries between work and life, with Internet and communication technologies (ICT) making it easier to work remotely (Felstead at al., 2005; Golden and Geisler, 2007). Despite the benefits of flexible working offered by ICT, however, there is a growing literature on how such blurring of the work/life boundary may actually have negative effects for individuals (ibid; Chesley, 2005). Chesley (2005), for example, examined how technology use (in the form of Internet, e-mail, cell phones and pagers) could cause negative spillover effects from the work to family domain impacting upon individuals' family satisfaction. In their study of the manner in which personal digital assistants (PDAs) were used by individuals to manage the work-life boundary, Golden and Geisler (2007) identified both utopian and dystopian views of technology use. The former sees technology as an enabling device to increase individual efficacy over the management of their work and life, whilst the dystopian view sees technology as an instrument of workplace control capturing individuals' private information. Golden and Geisler's respondents reflected both of these views with some viewing PDAs as a positive and agential tool and others as allowing work to 'greedily' encroach on their personal time. Indeed, the role of devices such as PDAs and Blackberries in intensifying work effort has been noted by other writers such as Green (2006) and Warhurst et al. (2008). Golden and Geisler (ibid) were also aware of 'the potential vulnerability created by recording private information in a device that travels into the more public realm of work' (p. 542), thus realising that technology which crosses the work-life boundary does not just take work into life but also life into work.

The studies noted above, however, consider technologies explicitly marketed and/or used for work purposes. When considering *social* media (generally used for reasons other than work) issues surrounding worker privacy and extension of employer control outside of the

[2] Campbell-Clark restricts her discussion of non-work life to the family, reflecting a weakness apparent in much work on the work-life boundary (see for example also Chesley, 2005).

workplace have the potential to become more egregious still. Although Chesley (2005) notes that current expectations of young people around technology use and '24/7 connectivity' may make the blurring of work-life boundaries an 'irrelevant' concern, he nevertheless realizes the importance of further research into users' expectations about technologies and, essentially, their control over them (p. 1246). Similarly Golden and Geisler reiterate the importance of investigating the limitations of personal agency in controlling how technology is used to transcend the work-life boundary. Workers' perceptions of employer use of social media are thus integral to investigate how any transcendence of the boundary between work and non-work lives are contested and managed by workers.

Perceptions of fairness and justice

Most of the research on perceptions and experiences of employer use of Internet technology has been conducted within the recruitment and selection literature. A decade ago, Searle (2003) argued that the efficiency benefits of web-based or e-recruitment for employers had been emphasised to the neglect of their potential impact on applicants. Although Searle's discussion referred to the use of Internet technology to sift high volumes of applications and to communicate information to applicants, her concern over procedural justice is still apposite with respect to employers' use of social media (both for recruitment and elsewhere in the employment relationship). Questions surrounding the control applicants (and by extension workers) have over their personal details are just as relevant a decade later, albeit that the issues have taken on a different character.

The use of social media in recruitment can lead to positive applicant perceptions of the employer or job vacancy. Doherty (2010) argues that using social media as part of an attraction strategy engages candidates on a more informal level, and offers the opportunity to build on-going relationships which in turn can increase candidate loyalty. Opportunities for applicants to evaluate their fit with the organisation through such recruitment mechanisms are often cited as enhancing perceived fairness (or social validity) and to lead to positive outcomes, such as increased future job satisfaction and a decrease in employee turnover (Breaugh and Starke, 2000). Employers who use social media sites to target graduates and professionals are aware of this positive effect on applicant perceptions. The Association of Graduate Recruiters (2012) found 96 per cent of employers recruiting for graduate positions used online marketing to attract candidates, especially LinkedIn. Use of Facebook by some large leading companies allows potential applicants to ask questions, receive regular updates about job and internship opportunities and learn about organisational culture. These positive perceptions, in turn, are thought to lead to fewer dropouts from the application process.

Nevertheless, the use of social media to recruit workers can also have negative implications for candidates. Verhoeven and Williams (2008) found UK employers acknowledging that online recruitment practices using social media introduced new avenues for discrimination. Concerns have been raised over employer misuse of SN sites (Brown and Vaughn, 2011; Davison, et al., 2011) and the job-relatedness of public, non-professional information used to support hiring decisions (Doherty, 2010). A lack of standardization in

information presented on SN sites makes it difficult to establish job-relevant criteria across candidates. Inaccuracies in tags and posts means hiring decisions could be based on erroneous information, with information easily taken out of context (Smith and Kidder 2010). The potential for employer misuse of information displayed on SN sites is large, although the extent of any misuse remains largely unknown.

Applicant perceptions of the fairness of employer practices have become an important element of several models of successful staffing. These include Gilliland's (1994) work on the procedural and distributive justice of selection systems, Schuler's (1993) concept of social validity of selection procedures (i.e. the extent to which these situations are socially acceptable to applicants), and Derous and deWitte's (2001) social process model of selection. The latter identified eight 'social process' characteristics which are important to potential job applicants, including: allowing candidate participation in the selection process; creation of transparency by employers, provision of feedback during the process, and guarantee of objectivity in employers' decision making. Bauer, et al. (2001), similarly, developed a measure of Gilliland's (1993) procedural justice rules called the Selection Procedural Justice Scale (SPJS). This scale included perceptions of: the job-relatedness of selection methods, the opportunity for candidates to show job relevant performance, reconsideration opportunity (the chance to challenge or modify employer judgements), consistency of administration by employers, feedback, the opportunity for two-way communication, and propriety of questions (the extent to which questions were viewed as fair, appropriate and respecting privacy). The implications for employer use of social media during the hiring process are clear. If candidates, for example, view such use as irrelevant for predicting job performance, lacking transparency and consistency, and an inappropriate invasion of privacy, then we may expect negative reactions towards employers.

Employee perceptions of fairness and justice are also relevant when examining employers' use of social media in employment. As discussed above, employer monitoring of workers' SN sites can lead to discipline or dismissal. If workers' perceive this monitoring as unjust or unfair, for many of the same reasons discussed in relation to perceptions of recruitment and selection practices, then contestation over the use of this technology may occur.

The literature has revealed the fruitfulness of investigating employers' use of social media from the perspective of the worker. Technology remains a key source of monitoring, surveillance and control within the labour process and social media potentially allows the extension of this control into workers' non-work lives. Such use potentially blurs the boundary between work and life and workers may not have the opportunity to exert control over this process. This blurring of boundaries can occur during recruitment and selection processes and within employment itself. Through examining workers' perception of justice and fairness, the potential for contestation over this new domain of control at various points in the employment relationship may be revealed. As little research exists on workers' experiences and perceptions of employers' social media usage, the following exploratory research questions are proposed to begin to address this gap.

1. What are workers' experiences of social media use in the employment sphere?

2. How do workers react to both realised and potential employer use of social media in terms of perceptions of fairness and justice?
3. How is workers' on-line behaviour shaped by employer practice; e.g. do they try and maintain control over how employers use their data on social media?

Methodology

Sample

The research was based on an electronically-distributed survey sent to all undergraduate business/management school students in three Scottish Universities. Students were considered a suitable group to investigate for the reasons discussed in the introduction. The survey was sent to approximately 4,200 student university e-mail addresses in total, with 482 responses (a response rate of approximately 11.5%). Of those responses, 408 were usable as 74 had no work experience (a usable response rate of 9.7%). This low response rate was despite advertising the survey in lectures prior to distribution in two of the universities and offering a prize draw incentive in all universities. It is possible that some of the sample did not receive or open the survey depending on whether or how often they checked their university e-mail accounts. The survey also overlapped with the National Student Satisfaction Survey (NSS) targeted at all final year UK undergraduate students. This clash may also have affected response rates as universities heavily promote the NSS. Usable response rates within the Universities ranged from approximately 8-12 per cent. The institution in which it was not possible to advertise the survey in lectures prior to the survey did not have the lowest response rate.

As expected, the majority of the usable sample were young, with 95 per cent aged 18-25 and 70 per cent aged 18-21. Eighty-one per cent of the sample were UK nationals and 98 per cent studied full-time. Applicants were asked to rate their occupation and mode of working in their current or most recent work experience. Customer service (55%) and elementary occupations - such as waiting/bar staff and shelf stackers (20%) - were by far the most widely reported occupations in the sample, consistent with the kinds of occupations which students are most likely to occupy (Curtis and Lucas, 2000). Eight per cent of the sample reported working in managerial or professional occupations and 15 per cent in intermediate occupations such as administrative and personal service (e.g. leisure assistants/travel agents) occupations. Given the concentration within low paid service occupations and the uneven distribution amongst occupations, no occupational comparisons are reported here. Seventy-eight per cent of the sample worked part-time whilst 26 per cent stated that they had some form of managerial/supervisory responsibility.

Measures

The survey was extensive and exploratory investigating respondents' experiences of employers' use of SN sites during recruitment and in the workplace, their perceptions of the fairness and justice of such use and the extent to which consideration of employers affected their on-line behaviour. The survey explicitly asked about SN sites that were

publicly available (such as Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn) rather than workplace SN sites. Experiences were gauged by simply asking whether respondents had experienced certain usages of SN sites in the employment sphere. Areas covered included awareness of employer use of SN sites to pre-screen job applicants; whether employers had disapproved of respondents' in work and out of work activities posted on SN sites; and whether employers used SN sites to communicate with workers in various ways.

Although the focus here is on employer use of SN sites, worker initiated use was also considered, to ascertain whether respondents actively used SN sites within the employment sphere themselves. Potential activities included whether respondents had: actively used an SN site to find work for themselves; had discussed work with colleagues over an SN site; or had organised a work-related social event via an SN site. Respondents were also asked the extent to which they used various SN sites for work rather than social purposes.

To ascertain respondents' perceptions of fairness and justice questions were first asked regarding overall perceived fairness of employer use of such sites for various recruitment and in-work activities. Activities included using SN sites to: search for applicants, administer on-line tests and pre screen applicants during recruitment; monitor workers in and out of the workplace; communicate with workers; collect personal information on workers; and assess workers' performance. Responses were scored on a five point scale ranging from 'not at all fair' to 'very fair'.

Perceptions of procedural justice were obtained using Gililand's (1993) Selection Procedural Justice Scale, adapted to consider also employers' SN site use *within* the workplace. The scale asked for agreement with statements on a five-point Likert scale (1 'strongly disagree' to 5 'strongly agree'). The statements were used to gauge perceptions on various elements of procedural justice including openness (whether the use of SN sites was gauged as impersonal); chance to perform (whether the use of SN sites allowed applicants or workers to display job skills); whether SN sites allow 2 way communication between employers and applicants/workers; reconsideration opportunity (whether applicants/workers had the chance to discuss results of decisions made via SN site data with employers); whether employers used data from SN sites consistently; whether SN sites allowed the establishment of person-organisation fit between employers and applicants/workers; the job relatedness of SN site data; whether SN site use by employers was fair as it was considered 'common use'; and whether it was fair and proper to use applicants' and workers' SN site data. Some items were reverse scored so that higher scores always represented higher perceived justice.

The final substantive element on which data was collected was whether consideration of employers affected respondents' on-line behaviour. Respondents were asked whether they managed their on-line profile and privacy settings with potential, current or previous employers in mind.

Analysis

As well as presenting descriptive overviews of workers' experiences of and attitude towards employers' SN site use, comparisons were made to ascertain whether workers' attitudes differed depending on their experiences and the extent to which they actively used SN sites for work purposes and/or managed their on-line data with employers in mind.

Findings

The findings begin with a description of respondents' own use of social media, either for social or work-related activity, before summarising their experiences of how employers use social media for recruitment and selection, and in the workplace. We then consider respondents' perceptions of fairness and justice with respect to employer practice, and the extent to which their on-line behaviour is affected by work-related considerations.

Respondents' use of social media

Almost all respondents reported using SN sites. Facebook was by far the most widely used (by 99 per cent of the sample) with 81 per cent of these using it multiple times each day. Twitter was the second most commonly used site (by 57 per cent of the sample) followed by LinkedIn (24 per cent). My Space, bebo and any 'other' SN sites were relatively rarely used (by approximately 4-7 per cent of the sample). Reported use of SN sites for work purposes was less common, although still prevalent. When examining the three most commonly used SN sites, 65 per cent reported having used Facebook for work purposes, although 74 per cent of these had only done so 'rarely' reflecting the site's predominant use as a social rather than work media. Twitter had been used for work purposes by 19 per cent, although 67 per cent did so only 'rarely' again reflecting the site as a predominantly social utility. Linkedin was used for work purposes by 92 per cent of those that reported using the site, with 73 per cent of LinkedIn users using it 'primarily' or exclusively for work purposes. This again reflects the site's predominant usage as a professional networking forum.

Approximately one third reported that they had used a SN site to find a job and 37 per cent that they had approached existing friends and contacts on SN sites to try and find work. Approximately 45 per cent of those approaching friends (17 per cent of the total sample) had successfully secured a job via this route compared to only 23 per cent who had attempted to find a job through a SN site without using friends. Respondents also used SN sites proactively within work, with 26 per cent reporting that they had arranged a work-related social event or discussed work with colleagues over a SN site, without being encouraged to do this by an employer (see Table 1).

Experiences of employers' use of social media for recruitment and selection

Approximately 17 per cent of respondents reported that an employer had tried to recruit them via a SN site. Only 17 per cent of these had taken a job after being approached in this manner. A slightly higher proportion (21 per cent) had been approached by existing friends and/or contacts on a SN site about a job vacancy, with over a third (35 per cent) accepting a job having been approached in this manner. Only 4 per cent of the sample reported that employers had encouraged them to contact friends and contacts on SN sites to try and recruit them for jobs.

Respondents were asked whether they were aware of 'prospective, past or current employers' using SN sites to screen job applicants, with 29 per cent reporting that they were. However, less than a third of those who were aware of this employer behaviour (32 per cent) reported that employers had informed them that they were using SN sites in this manner. This finding raises concerns over the transparency of employer use of applicant data from SN sites and, subsequently, the control that applicants have over how this data is used.

Respondents were asked to provide further details, in an open format, on their experiences of social networking during recruitment. Only six respondents in total provided such details, with these six indicating awareness of employers screening applicants' SN sites in industries as diverse as PR, retail, banking and oil.

Experiences of employers' use of SN sites in the workplace

A significant minority of respondents had experienced employer disapproval over their SN site activity (see Table 1). The most common source of employer disapproval reported by over a fifth (21 per cent) of respondents was for simply using SN sites during work time, with almost one third of these (32 per cent) reporting that they had been formally warned or disciplined for this behaviour. When asking whether an employer had ever disapproved of respondents' activities on SN sites, 10 per cent reported that activities *during working time* displayed on an SN site had attracted such disapproval, with almost half of these reporting that they had been formally warned or disciplined for this. Fewer than one in ten respondents (8 per cent) reported that an employer had ever disapproved of activities displayed on an SN site which had taken place *outside of* working time, with approximately a quarter of these (22 per cent) reporting that they had been formally disciplined or punished. The final potential source of disapproval was whether employers had objected to anything posted by the respondent specifically about them on a SN site, with seven per cent reporting that this had occurred. Where an employer disapproved about material posted about them by respondents on a SN site almost half (45 per cent) reported that they had been formally warned or disciplined about this.

These findings suggest that the chance of a formal warning or sanction over workers' SN site activity is rare and greater where the activity occurs within working time, or specifically concerns the employer, rather than where the activity occurs outside of working time. In a similar vein less than three per cent of respondents reported that employers had used information gathered from SN sites to comment upon or assess their

work performance. Given concerns over the validity of using such data to assess work performance, this appears to be a positive finding.

Respondents were also asked about less contentious uses of social media. Approximately 36 per cent reported that employers had encouraged them to arrange a work social event over a SN site; 18 per cent that employers had encouraged them to discuss work with colleagues or share information/collaborate with colleagues on a SN site; 15 per cent reported that employers had encouraged them to sign up to organisational groups such as discussion fora; and around 10 per cent that the employer had communicated organisational objectives and values to them via a SN site or had asked workers for feedback on the organisation via a SN site. Where employers had asked for feedback 57 per cent of respondents believed that feedback had been acted upon. There is, arguably, potential for extension of employer influence into non-work domains using these forms of social media. Nevertheless, respondents also showed that they were prepared to use SN sites for work purposes even when not encouraged to do so by an employer, as reported in the introduction to the findings. Forty-three percent of those arranging a work-related social event and 59 per cent of those discussing work with colleagues reported that they had not been encouraged to do so by their employer. Discussion of work with colleagues on a SN site may, of course, reflect negative action towards the employer, but proactive work-related use of social media by workers was still evident.

Table 1: Percentage experiencing employer use of SN sites in the workplace

1	Has employer ever explicitly disapproved of simply using an SN site during working time?	21%
2	Were you waned/disciplined for using an SN site at work?	7%
3	Has employer ever explicitly disapproved of activities during working time displayed on an SN site?	11%
4	Were you warned/disciplined for activities during working time displayed on an SN site?	5%
5	Has employer ever explicitly disapproved of activities outside working time displayed on an SN site?	8%
6	Were you warned/disciplined for activities outside working time displayed on an SN site?	2%
7	Has employer ever explicitly disapproved of material specifically about them you have posted on an SN site?	7%
8	Were you warned/disciplined for material specifically about employer you posted on an SN site?	3%
9	Have you/work colleagues ever organised a work-related social event outside of working time using an SN site?	62%
10	Did employer encourage/support organising a work related social event using SN sites?	36%
11	Do you use SN sites to discuss work with colleagues?	45%
12	Did/does employer encourage/support discussing work with colleagues on an SN site?	19%
13	Has your current/most recent employer ever encouraged you to share info/collaborate with colleagues on an SN site?	18%
14	Has current/most recent employer ever explicitly used material from an SN site to comment on/assess work performance?	3%
15	Has your current/most recent employer ever encouraged you to sign up to org groups such as discussion forums on SN sites?	15%
16	Has your current/most recent employer ever communicated org objectives, values etc… to you through an SN site?	10%
17	Has your current/most recent employer ever asked you for feedback on org through SN site?	11%
18	If asking for feedback do you feel that it was acted upon?	6%

Note: Table shows percentage of whole sample. Qs 2,4,6,8,12,14,20 were only answered if the preceding question was a positive response.

Many more respondents chose to answer the 'open' questions regarding experiences at work than experiences during recruitment (N=38, 9 per cent of the total sample). The experiences which were the most frequently discussed were employer policies on SN sites (N=12) and witnessing discipline for social networking activities in the workplace (N=9). Only one respondent reported being disciplined themselves, seven reported colleagues had been disciplined and one reported that friends in other organisations had been disciplined. In every instance (and consistent with the findings above) employers had disciplined employees for work-related matters such as negative posts about the employer or for photos taken during working time. Examples included one respondent's colleague who had been disciplined for referring to herself as an 'underpaid slave' on Facebook and workers who had been disciplined for negatively discussing work on SN sites with other colleagues and/or posting negative comments about the employer. Only two respondents reported that employers had 'caught out' employees, for example being out the night before and not 'showing up' to work, but did not report whether people were disciplined for this.

Thirty-two per cent of those answering the open questions reported that employers had explicit social network policies, had held meetings with staff about SN site use or had written clauses into their contracts regarding SN site use. Again these actions referred to commenting specifically on the employer or associating themselves with the employer on SN sites, although one respondent reported that the policy also included a prohibition on posting 'embarrassing photos' online. Some of these policies appeared rather draconian. For example, one respondent reported that their 'previous employer said that if anything was posted on Facebook about work it was instant dismissal. Even if it was positive.' Another respondent reported that their employer, 'had(ve) a specialist team that deal solely with employees mentioning their name on social networking sites – we are then disciplined for doing so.' These findings, although based on a small number of qualitative questions, support the assertion that employers were most likely to exert control over workers' SN site behaviour where it contained specific reference to them.

Perceptions of procedural justice: employer use of social media for recruitment and selection

Respondents were especially likely to report that the use of social media to pre-screen applicants was unfair (Table 2). Whilst approximately 32 per cent considered it 'fair' or 'very fair' to use SN sites to search for job applicants and 38 per cent to administer on-line tests through SN sites, only 13 per cent considered it fair to pre-screen applicants through examining their on-line activities. Using the full five-point scale, the former two employer activities had a mean score of approximately 3, representing an average view that these activities were neither fair nor unfair, whilst screening applicants through examining their SN site activity had a mean score of approximately 2, reflecting a view that this practice was 'not very fair'.

Table 2: Overall fairness of using social media in recruitment and selection

To what extent is it fair to use SN sites ...	N	% fair/v fair	M	SD
...to search for potential job applicants?	278	32	3.15	1.10
...for employers to pre-screen applicants through on-line tests?	277	38	3.32	1.09
...for employers to pre-screen applicants through examining their SN profiles/activities?	302	13	2.14	1.11

When examining respondents' views of procedural justice in more detail through the answers to Gilliland's (1993) elements of procedural justice the reasons for the above findings become clearer. Table 3 shows responses for the sub-factors of procedural justice. For each element of procedural justice, respondents rated employers' use of SN sites in recruitment as either neutral (a score of 3) or tending towards negative. The elements receiving the lowest fairness ratings were 'chance to perform' (i.e. recruitment through social media did not allow applicants' job skills to be shown) and 'reconsideration opportunity' (i.e. applicants could not discuss the outcome of decisions made via information gained from SN sites). Interestingly, these elements, which are related to the validity of using social media for selection decisions, were perceived as marginally less just than elements relating to the propriety of using social media (e.g. because it was an invasion of privacy). The element respondents were most likely to perceive as fair was the potential for two-way communication between applicants and employers offered by social media. There was also evidence of some 'creeping' acceptance of employer use of SN sites as the fact that it is known/considered common for employers to use SN sites received a neutral fairness rating.

Table 3: Perceived procedural justice of using social media in recruitment and selection

	Procedural justice element	N	M	SD
1	Openness of method (i.e. whether use of SN sites during recruitment is considered impersonal).	302	2.62	1.01
2	Chance to perform given by SN site use during recruitment (i.e. it enables applicants to show their job skills).	302	2.04	0.96
3	2-way communication SN sites allow between job applicants and employers.	302	3.29	1.06
4	Reconsideration opportunity (i.e. using SN sites to collect info on job applicants is unfair because applicants do not have the chance to discuss the information with potential employers).	302	2.07	0.93
5	Consistency of using SN sites to collect info on job applicants (i.e. unfair because potential applicants are not treated equally).	302	2.35	1.04
6	SN sites allow establishment of person-organisation fit.	302	2.69	1.07
7	Job relatedness of SN sites info in recruitment	301	2.33	0.87
8	Whether it is known/considered common use that SN sites are used in recruitment[b]	302	2.79	0.79
9	Whether it is fair/proper to use SN sites in recruitment	302	2.54	0.99
10	Overall procedural justice of SN sites in recruitment scale	301	2.53	0.62

T-tests were used to establish whether there were differences in perceived fairness depending on respondents' experiences of SN site use and their form of use of SN sites (i.e. the extent to which they used SN for work purposes). The most striking finding was that respondents with direct experience of SN sites during recruitment (besides where respondents had experience of recruiting friends through SN sites and securing friends jobs through SN sites) reported more favourable attitudes (see Table 4). Nevertheless, in most cases, the tendency was towards a neutral rather than positive response. Some of the more positive attitudes combined with the particular experiences may seem intuitive. For example, when people reported actively using a SN site to find work they were more likely to agree that the use of such sites was considered common use, that SN sites allowed two-way communication between applicants and employers, that SN sites allowed better assessment of person-organisation fit, and that it was fair for employers to use a SN site when searching for potential job applicants.

What is perhaps more interesting are the items related to the fairness and rights of employers to use SN sites during recruitment. Those who reported that employers had explicitly requested them to contact friends in order to recruit them for a job believed that it was fairer for employers to pre-screen through applicants' SN activities and to collect personal information via SN sites. Those who were aware that employers used SN sites (although not necessarily explicitly made aware of this by the employer) were also more likely to report that it was fair for employers to use SN sites to search for potential job applicants. Where respondents were made explicitly aware that employers used SN sites to screen applicants there were more significant results. Respondents were more likely to report that such use was proper and fair; that it was fairer for employers to pre-screen applicants through on-line tests/examining their on-line profiles; and that it was fairer for employers to monitor workers' behaviour whilst not at work. These results suggest that where an applicant knows employers use SN sites, and especially where the employer makes them explicitly aware or endorses the use of SN sites during recruitment they are marginally more likely to perceive this as fair.

In comparisons between those who had used SN sites for work purposes and those who had not, the only significant difference was that those ever using SN sites for work were more likely to believe it fair to use these sites to collect personal information on employees (mean of 2.09 compared to 1.59 in those who did not ($p = 0.05$)), although still deeming it as, on average, 'not very fair'.

Table 4: Perceived procedural justice by respondent experience of SN sites for recruitment and selection[a]

Experience of SN site use for recruitment and selection	Element of procedural justice	N	Means (Y/N)
1. Ever actively used an SN site to find a job (in general or by approaching friends).[b]	Two-way comm. P-O fit. Info known/common use. Fair for employers to use SN sites to search for potential job applicants.	298 298 298 274	**3.43** / 3.17 * **2.80** / 2.55 * **2.91** / 2.65 ** **3.27** / 3.00 *
2. Ever approached through SN site to be recruited for a job (either by org or friends).[c]	-	-	-
3. Experience of recruiting friends through an SN site (either approaching them or they approach you). [d]	Chance to perform. Fair for employers to pre-screen via on-line tests on SN sites.	296 272	1.86 / **2.13** * **3.59 /** 3.18 *
4. Ever secured a job through a SN site (whatever method). [e]	Info known/common use.	116	**2.99** / 2.49 **
5. Ever secured friends a job if they approached over SN site.	Reconsideration opportunity. Job relatedness scale.	125 125	1.74 / **2.15 *** 2.10 **/ 2.47 ***
6. Did an employer ever directly request contacting recruits over an SN site?	Two-way comm. Fair for employers to pre-screen applicants through examining on-line profile/activities. Fair for employers to collect personal info via SN sites	97 81 81	**3.83** / 3.35 * **2.91** / 2.13 * **2.83** / 1.96 **
7. Ever aware of employers re-screening applicants over SN sites	Openness. Chance to perform. Fair for employers to use SN sites to search for potential job applicants.	299 299 275	**2.79** / 2.54 * **2.21** / 1.96 * **3.34** / 3.06 *
8. Respondent /other applicants made explicitly aware that employer using SN sites to screen applicants	Job relatedness. Fairness/proprietary. Fair for employers to pre-screen via on-line tests on SN sites. Fair for employers to pre-screen applicants through examining on-line profile/activities. Fair for employers to monitor behaviour whilst not at work.	128 128 106 106 106	**2.75 /** 2.34 * **2.98 /** 2.57 * **3.71** / 3.22* **2.67** / 2.07 * **2.04** / 1.63 *

Notes: Higher means are highlighted. * $p \leq 0.05$, **$p < 0.01$ *** $p = 0.001$

a. Only significant results reported, hence some cells blank.

b. Created by combining whether ever used an SN site to find a job and whether friends were approached on an SN site to find a job.

c. Created by combining whether either an organization or a friend on an SN site had approached respondent to recruit them for a job

d. Created by combining whether friends had ever approached respondent over an SN site to find a job for themselves or whether respondent had contacted friend about a job for them over an SN site.

e. Created by combining whether the respondent had secured a job after searching for one on an SN site, approaching friends through an SN site or being approached by an org/friends through an SN site.

Perceptions of procedural justice: employer use of social media in the workplace

As with recruitment, respondents were asked general questions about their perceptions of the procedural justice of using SN sites in the workplace, whilst Gilliland's (1993) elements of procedural justice were also applied to employers' workplace use of SN sites. When examining the overall perceptions of the fairness of using SN sites in the workplace, apart from where SN sites were used to simply communicate with employees (which was deemed as 'fair' or 'very fair' by over 44 per cent), respondents did not see employer use of such sites as particularly fair (see Table 5). Respondents felt that it was particularly unfair for employers to monitor workers' behaviour whilst not at work, to collect personal information on employees and to make disciplinary/dismissal decisions based on information collected on SN sites. Only three per cent believed it to be 'fair' or 'very fair' for employers to monitor behaviour whilst not at work whilst approximately 7 per cent believed it to be 'fair' or 'very fair' to use SN sites to collect personal information on employees and discipline/dismiss employees. All scores had a mean tending towards two, indicating an average perception that such use was 'not very fair'.

Table 5: Perceived fairness of SN site use in the workplace

	To what extent is it fair to use SN sites to …	**N**	**% fair/v fair**	**M**	**SD**
1	… monitor workers' behaviour whilst they are at work?	278	35	3.22	1.12
2	… monitor workers' behaviour whilst they are not at work?	278	3	1.61	0.82
3	… communicate with employees?	278	44	3.65	0.99
4	… collect personal information on employees?	278	7	2.03	0.93
5	… collect information related to employee job performance?	278	21	2.62	1.20
6	… gather information to discipline employees?	278	7	1.92	1.03
7	… gather information related to dismiss employees?	278	7	1.80	1.06

For the various elements of procedural justice, there was neutral to negative perceived fairness (see Table 6). The only element that had a mean score greater than the neutral value of 3 was for 'use of SN sites allowed two-way communication between employers and workers'. Once again, the lowest mean scores were given to job-relatedness and the lack of opportunity to discuss such information with their employers/supervisors. Respondents also showed a negative tendency when considering the reliability (consistency) of using information data gathered from SN sites, the openness of using such information and the fairness and propriety of gathering information on workers from SN sites.

Table 7 shows differences in perceptions of fairness and justice depending on respondents' experiences of SN site use in the workplace. Respondents reacted negatively to employer use of social media when it extended into their non-work lives. Although most scores tended towards neutral or negative whatever respondents' experiences of SN site use, there were nevertheless some interesting contrasts revealed.

Table 6: Perceived procedural justice of using social media within the workplace

		N	M	SD
1	Job relatedness (i.e. using SN sites to collect info on workers is an effective way of identifying people who are not doing their job).	279	2.57	1.1
2	Openness (i.e. using SN sites to collect info on current employees is too impersonal).	279	2.46	0.92
3	Chance to perform (i.e. information gathered on workers through SN sites is not related to job skills).	279	2.16	0.88
4	2-way communication.	279	3.23	1.03
5	Reconsideration opportunity (i.e. employees do not have chance to discuss information gathered on them through SN sites with their supervisor/employers).	279	2.15	0.87
6	Consistency (i.e. using SN sites to collect info on current employees is unfair because not everyone is treated equally).	279	2.32	0.93
7	Person organisation fit.	279	2.54	1.05
8	Whether it is known/considered common use that SN sites are used in employment[a]	279	2.61	0.79
9	Whether it is fair/proper to use SN sites in employment[b]	279	2.43	0.90
10	Overall procedural justice of SN sites in recruitment scale	279	2.50	0.59

Respondents reporting that employers had explicitly disapproved of activities outside of working time displayed on a SN site were most likely to report lower scores on various procedural justice elements (see Table 7). Some of the perceived areas of unfairness were consistent with their particular experience, for example workers perceived it as less fair for employers to monitor workers' behaviour when not at work and to collect personal information on workers through SN sites. Where respondents had been disapproved of for posting material specifically about their employer on-line they also perceived it as less fair for employers to use SN sites to monitor employees (see Table 7). Those reporting ever being disciplined for using SN sites in the workplace also reported lower levels of procedural justice in terms of two-way communication between employers and workers. There was one circumstance in which those who had had a 'negative' experience with their employers reported higher levels of procedural justice. Those who had experienced disapproval for activities during working time that were displayed on a SN site had significantly higher scores for the perceived fairness of employers in collecting data from SN sites about employees' personal lives (although still rated on average as 'not very fair').

Where respondents had experienced more potentially positive forms of employer interaction over SN sites such as encouraging workers to arrange social events, encouraging workers to discuss and share work with colleagues and seeking feedback from the organisation, they were more favourable towards various procedural justice elements (See Table 7). Those experiencing such employer use were, for example, more likely to agree that it was fair for employers to communicate with employees in this way. As with some recruitment processes these findings suggest that where employers explicitly endorse the use of SN sites employees may be more likely to perceive processes as fair, despite general levels of cynicism. Perhaps surprisingly, those reporting that employers

encouraged discussing work with colleagues and/or sought feedback over SN sites, reported marginally higher fairness with employers using SN sites to monitor employees' out of work behaviour. Although these scores still tended towards thinking this practice was 'not very fair', it is possible that employer communication via SN sites may be paving the way for greater acceptance of more invasive monitoring.

In comparisons of those who had used SN sites for work purposes and those who had not, there were few significant differences. Nevertheless, those reporting that they had used SN sites for work purposes had a significantly higher procedural justice score for the use of social media in the workplace. This group also reported greater perceived fairness for the use of social media for collecting personal information on employees and for dismissing employees. Despite higher scores, however, each facet still tended toward disagreement or low perceived fairness, reinforcing the generally negative view of respondents.

Table 7: Perceived procedural justice by experience of SN sites in the workplace [a]

Experience of SN site use in the workplace	Element of procedural justice	N	Means (Y/N)
1. Employer has ever explicitly disapproved of simply using an SN site during working time.	-	-	-
2. Employer has ever explicitly disapproved of activities during working time displayed on an SN site.	Fair for employers to collect personal info on employees through SN sites.	277	**2.42** / 1.98 *
3. Employer has ever explicitly disapproved of activities outside working time displayed on an SN site.	Fair for employers to monitor workers' behaviour when not at work through SN sites.	277	1.32 / **1.64** *
	Fair for employers to use SN sites to collect personal info on employees.	277	1.64 **/ 2.07 ***
	Common use (appropriate as most employers use now).	278	1.76 / **2.35 ** **
	P-O fit.	278	2.04 / **2.58 ***
	Two-way comm.	278	2.72 / **3.28 ***
	Fairness and proprietary.	278	1.90 / **2.49** **
	Overall procedural justice scale.	277	2.13 / **2.54 ** **
4. Employer has ever explicitly disapproved of something posted about them on an SN site.	Fairness and proprietary.	276	1.98 / **2.46 ***
5. Ever been disciplined for SN site use.[a]	Two-way communication.	80	2.89 / **3.42** *
6. Ever arranged a social event outside of working time on an SN site.	-	-	-
7. Employers ever encouraged the arrangement of social events outside of work on SN sites.	Fair for employers to monitor employees whilst at work via SN sites.	195	**3.39** / 3.04 *
	Fair to collect info on employees' job performance.	195	**2.73** / 2.30 *
8. Ever use SN sites to discuss work with colleagues.	Fair for employers to communicate with employees through SN sites	278	**3.82** / 3.47 *
9. Employers encourage discussing work with colleagues over SN sites.	Fair to monitor employees when not at work.	157	**1.78** / 1.47 *
10. Current/most recent employer encourage sharing work information with colleagues over SN sites.	Two-way communication.	279	**3.63** / 3.12 **
11. Current/most recent employer ever used SN site to comment on/assess work performance.	-	-	**-**
12. Current/most recent employer ever encouraged to sign up to org groups such as discussion forums on SN sites.	Two-way communication,	276	**3.53** / 3.17 *
	Known/common usage.	276	**2.82 /** 2.56 *

Experience of SN site use in the workplace	Element of procedural justice	N	Means (Y/N)
13. Has your current/most recent employer ever communicated org objectives, values etc… to you through an SN site?	_	-	-
14. Has your current/most recent employer ever asked you for feedback on org through SN site?	Fair for employers to monitor employees behaviour whilst not at work through SN sites.	274	**2.00** / 1.55 *
15. If asking for feedback do you feel that it was acted upon?	Fair for employers to monitor employees behaviour whilst not at work through SN sites. Fair for employers to use SN sites to collect personal info on employees. Fair to gather information to discipline employees.	75 75 75	**2.25** / 1.69 * **2.60** / 2.02 * **2.50 /** 1.85 *

Notes: Higher means are highlighted * p ≤ 0.05, **p < 0.01 *** p = 0.001

a. Only significant results reported, hence some cells blank.

b. Created by combining whether respondents had ever been disciplined for the following: simply using a SN site at work, activities during working time displayed on a SN site, activities outside of working time displayed on a SN site and posting material specifically about the employer on a SN site (items 2,4, 6, 8 in Table 1).

Effects on on-line behaviour

The final area investigated was the extent to which employers influenced respondents' on-line SN behaviour. With respect to recruitment 51 per cent reported that they managed their on-line profile with p*otential* employers in mind. When examining behaviour related to the workplace over 50 per cent reported that they managed their on-line profile with *current or previous* employers in mind and 57 per cent reported managing their SN site privacy settings with *current or previous* employers in mind.

Supporting the proportion reporting that they managed their on-line profiles with employers in mind, 12/21 respondents providing 'open' responses reported that they either managed their privacy settings or moderated their SN site with employers in mind. Whilst the numbers are too small to draw any general conclusions, this was by far the most widely reported experience related to recruitment and was, in all cases, reported in such a way not so much to *question* employer use, but to state realisation that SN data could be used by recruiters in a negative way. One respondent for example stated that, 'people should be aware of employers when choosing what to put on these sites such as photos on nights out etc… as it may be bad for your image…'. One respondent also displayed ambiguity as to the effectiveness of using privacy settings stating that they were 'not sure' what employers could see once information had been made private. Only one of the 21 respondents displayed outwardly negative feelings towards employers using SN site data during recruitment. This respondent actively did *not* manage their SN profiles with employers in mind and stated:

> 'I believe that self-censorship of social networking for employment purposes spoils the experience. I believe that any employer who'll build up a negative character

profile of someone because they are, perhaps, obviously drunk in a couple of photographs really isn't the type of company I want to work for'.

A large proportion (26 per cent) of the 38 providing open responses to the questions on experiences of employer use in the workplace also referred to managing their privacy settings at work or controlling which posts their managers/colleagues could see. One respondent, for example, stated that, 'the answer [to whether employers had disapproved of SN site activities] is 'no' only because I hide anything regarding work from them in the privacy settings'. Other respondents reported other tactics for example grouping 'work' friends on Facebook separately from other friends so that only non-work friends saw 'photos of nights out'. A further example was a respondent being advised by colleagues not to 'friend' managers on SN sites.

It is possible that active management of personal information on SN sites affected perceptions of fairness. Both recruitment and in-work perceptions of justice were higher for respondents who had reported actively managing their on-line activities with employers in mind, although perceptions remained negative to neutral rather than positive (see Table 8). Those managing their on-line profiles with future employers in mind were more likely to agree that SN sites could identify future job performance, that the use of SN sites in recruitment was known to be common use amongst employers, that SN sites allowed two-way communication and person-organisation fit and that it was fair and proper for employers to use SN sites during recruitment. The overall procedural justice of using SN sites was also higher in this group. These results suggest that the known use of SN sites by employers may be a factor in encouraging management of on-line profiles and/or that applicants were more likely to perceive procedural justice where they retained control over what employers could see about them on-line.

When examining behaviour within the workplace, those who actively managed their on-line profiles and privacy settings with current or previous employers in mind were more likely to report increased procedural justice in areas such as job-relatedness, person-organisation fit and overall procedural justice. Nevertheless perceptions of justice were still not positive. Again it appeared that where respondents had greater control over what employers could see in their on-line profiles they reported higher procedural justice, although the results were not as stark as for recruitment. Those who actively used SN sites for work purposes also reported marginally higher perceptions of procedural justice. Despite generally negative perceptions of justice, therefore, perceptions were marginally more positive where workers appeared more active in how they used SN sites in relation to employment.

Table 8: Perceived procedural justice by whether respondents manage on-line profiles with employers in mind[a]

	Element of procedural justice	N	Means (Y/N)
Manage profile with future employers in mind (i.e. for recruitment).	Job relatedness. Two-way communication. PO fit. Known/common usage. Overall procedural justice scale. Fair for employers to use SN sites to search for potential job applicants.	299 298 298 298 297 274	**2.52** / 2.28 ** **3.43** / 3.17 * **2.82** / 2.50 * **2.94** / 2.59 ** **2.62** / 2.41 ** **3.32** / 2.92 **
Manage SN site privacy settings with current/previous employers in mind.	Chance to perform	278	**2.23** / 2.01 *
Manage profile with current/previous employer in mind.	Job relatedness. Person organisation fit. Overall procedural justice scale	268 268 267	**2.67** / 2.33 * **2.65** / 2.30 ** **2.55** / 2.40 *

Notes: Higher means are highlighted * $p \leq 0.05$, **$p < 0.01$ *** $p = 0.001$
a. Only significant results reported, hence some cells blank

Discussion and Conclusions

This exploratory study sought to gather evidence on a potentially new 'contested terrain' of employer monitoring and control which could extend outside the workplace; that of employer use of social media to collect information on recruits and current workers. The findings reveal that a number of the student respondents had experienced some form of employer use of social media during recruitment and within the workplace. Although there was not widespread evidence of employers attempting to extend control over current employees' non-work lives through monitoring their SN site activities, 7-11 per cent of respondents reported that employers had disapproved of activities shown on SN sites. Employers were more likely to take formal action where these activities had occurred during work-time or where posts specifically concerned them. Over a fifth of respondents also reported that employers had disapproved of them for simply using SN sites during working time. It may be that employers are keen to ensure that non-work activities do not creep into the workplace thus maintaining a boundary between employees' work and non-work lives. These findings also suggest that employers may be more concerned with material posted on SN sites which may bring them into disrepute rather than in controlling employees' non-work activities, an assertion tentatively supported by the qualitative data. This replicates findings from Watson's (2012) qualitative study of the social media usage policies of Scottish employers from a number of sectors.

There did still remain the potential for 'creeping' extension of employer influence via ostensibly more anodyne use of SN sites. A significant proportion of respondents reported that employers used SN sites to communicate organisational objectives to them, had encouraged them to collaborate with colleagues on-line, had encouraged them to sign up to organisational discussion groups, or had encouraged them to organise work-related social

events via SN sites. Such use could extend the culture of organisations into employees' non-work lives permeating the work-life boundary and allowing normative controls to encroach upon employees' private lives (Fleming and Spicer, 2004). Employees who had experienced such 'cultural' employer use of SN sites also had marginally more positive perceptions of procedural justice, including in monitoring workers' non-work activities. This finding also offers tentative evidence that certain kinds of SN site use encouraged by employers could increase the acceptability of employer control extending into non-work spheres. Through encouraging work-related matters to be conducted on SN sites there is also the potential for technology to encroach upon the work-life boundary, allowing work to 'greedily' spill over into non-work lives (Golden and Geisler, 2007).

There was more evidence of employers using employees' SN information during recruitment, with almost 30 per cent of the sample aware of employers pre-screening applicants using data from SN sites. Perhaps more concerning is that less than a third of these respondents had been made explicitly aware of this by the employer. Such lack of transparency has implications for applicant privacy, the control that they have over the information that they share on SN sites (see also Trottier and Lyon, 2011) and the potential for 'dystopian' technology use in accessing employees' personal data (Golden and Geisler, 2007). With concerns over the validity of SN site use for selection decisions (Doherty 2010) the extent of employer use reported here is revealing. It is also revealing that almost any respondent experience of SN sites during recruitment and selection whether initiated by the individual or an organisation lead to marginally higher perceptions of procedural justice, again possibly reflecting a creeping acceptance of employer use. There was also no widespread hostility, shown in the qualitative data, towards employers for using SN data during recruitment.

Respondents in this survey were almost exclusively members of the technologically literate generation 'Y' (Tenwick, 2008). Nevertheless perceptions of the fairness and justice of employers' use of social media in both recruitment and the workplace were generally negative. Respondents displayed concerns over the validity, propriety and fairness of using SN site data on job applicants and current employees. Respondents believed that it was especially unfair for employers to use SN sites to pre-screen job applicants, monitor workers' non-work activities, collect personal information on workers and discipline and dismiss workers. Workers thus appeared to desire a boundary between their work and non-work activities (see also Golden and Geisler, 2007; Trottier and Lyon, 2011). This finding also contradicts Chesley's (2005) assertion that the current generation's expectations about '24/7 connectivity' may make discussions of technology's role in blurring the work-life boundary 'irrelevant' (p. 1246).

Many of the biggest concerns over procedural justice, especially in recruitment, related to the perceived lack of job-relatedness of using social media to assess the suitability of recruits and workers. Respondents thus reflected a concern that employers could misuse their data, as also reported by Davison et al. (2011) and Brown and Vaughn (2011). The particularly low perceptions of fairness in monitoring workers' behaviour whilst not at work, collecting personal information on employees, and pre-screening applicants through SN sites also potentially reflect concerns over data misuse. Although we do not have robust

data on whether such misuse actually occurred, this nevertheless represents a concern amongst young workers, and one that is ripe for future intensive research.

Respondents were not simply passive recipients of employer use of social media, however. Fifty to fifty-seven per cent of the sample reported that they controlled their on-line profile or privacy settings with potential, current or previous employers in mind. These were also amongst the most commonly shared experiences reported in the open ended qualitative questions. Many of our student sample were thus alert to the potential of employers accessing personal information on their SN sites, whether or nor they had experienced it directly, and displayed agency in managing this. Where respondents reported this agency over managing their data they also reported marginally higher (although generally not positive) perceptions of procedural justice, potentially reflecting the benefit of maintaining control over their social data. Similarly, those who reported actively using SN sites for work purposes also reported higher levels of procedural justice.

We thus witness the potential for creeping employer influence into employees' non-work lives via SN sites, especially during recruitment, although widespread attempts by employers to monitor and control workers' non-work activities were not evident. What is clear is that this young sample, about to enter the labour market, display awareness of the potential for employers to blur the work-life boundary via SN sites. Furthermore, many report agency in controlling the access that employers have to their on-line information. If workers wish to maintain a boundary between how their non-work activities are perceived in the workplace there therefore exists potential for them to control how this occurs. Nevertheless, the potential for employers to show a lack of transparency in using employees' SN site activities and even extending cultural control outwith the workplace remains, and workers and job applicants need to remain alert to this if they want to maintain boundaries between work and life.

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